



TENNESSEE EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS BOARD NEWS RELEASE

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STATE EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS BOARD VOTES TO MODERNIZE 911 INFRASTRUCTURE

NASHVILLE, TN- The Tennessee Emergency Communications Board (TECB) has voted unanimously to initiate a statewide project which will modernize the infrastructure that transports the state's 911 calls. The modernization project, named "Next Generation 911" (NG911), will substantially improve communications, interoperability and reliability statewide by deploying a secure Internet Protocol platform connecting all 143 call centers in Tennessee.

After extensive review and advice from technical consultants, the Board determined that the project is critical to the long range needs of a 911 system that serves all Tennessee citizens, whether they call for help from wireline, wireless, voice over internet protocol (VoIP) or other technology devices. With the Board's decision, Tennessee will maintain its status as a national leader in 911.

Experts from the National Emergency Number Association agree that there is an "urgent" need to modernize the nation's 911 infrastructure.

"From a national perspective, it's really a matter of 'when' rather than 'if' it's going to happen, says TECB chairman Randy Porter. "Much of Tennessee's present 911 infrastructure is built on 30-year-old analog technology that was put in place to facilitate the phone companies' landline phone billing. That infrastructure is not working ideally for the new VoIP technology. In addition, the new technology will allow all the call centers in the state to transfer calls, information, and maps which will basically be linked into a single system and communicate instantly," said Porter.

Other governmental entities, from emergency responders to property assessors, will have an opportunity to connect into the IP platform, resulting in vastly improved interoperability.

"Imagine you witness a bank robbery and snap a picture of the robber on your cell phone camera," says TECB executive director Lynn Questell. "With the new IP technology, you can send that picture along with your 911 call, and the call center will be able to send it immediately to the police officer who has a terminal in his or her squad car."

Questell says the benefits of the new technology will impact the system's functionality, redundancy and reliability. "With the Katrina disaster the IP 911 network was reported to have worked better than the telephonic infrastructure, much of which was destroyed."

Deployment of NG911 could begin within the next year.

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The Tennessee Emergency Communications Board serves as the state's authority for E-911 issues and financial oversight of the state's 100 local emergency communications districts. For more information visit our website at: www.state.tn.us/commerce/911/